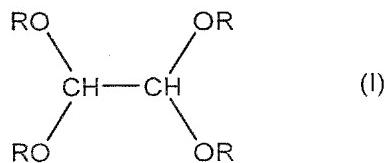


Amendments to the Claims

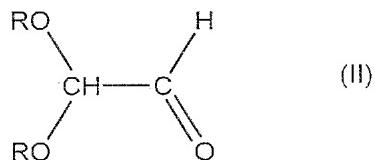
This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1. (Currently Amended) Process for the separation of a glyoxal diacetal of formula (I)



in which R represents a linear or branched C₁ - C₄ alkyl group, from a crude mixture comprising said glyoxal diacetal and a glyoxal monoacetal of formula (II)



in which R is as defined above, characterized in that ~~wherein~~ at least one step of countercurrentwise liquid-liquid extraction of said glyoxal diacetal is carried out using a solvent which is immiscible with the reaction medium, in order to obtain, on the one hand, a light phase comprising said

glyoxal diacetal and, on the other hand, a heavy phase including the other constituents of the crude mixture.

2. (Currently Amended) Process according to Claim 1, characterized in that ~~wherein~~ said crude mixture comprises predominantly a glyoxal diacetal of formula (I) as defined in Claim 1, a glyoxal monoacetal of formula (II) as defined in Claim 1, and water.

3. (Original) Process according to Claim 1 or Claim 2, characterized in that the solvent is chosen from ethers, alkanes and aromatic hydrocarbons.

4. (Currently Amended) Process according to ~~any~~ one of ~~Claims~~ ~~claim 1 to 3~~, characterized in that ~~wherein~~ the solvent is chosen from cyclohexane, n-heptane and toluene.

5. (Currently Amended) Process according to ~~any~~ one of ~~Claims~~ ~~claim 1 to 4~~, characterized in that ~~wherein~~ the solvent/crude mixture ratio by weight is between 0.3/1 and 5/1.

6. (Currently Amended) Process according to ~~any~~ one of ~~Claims~~ ~~claim 1 to 5~~, characterized in that ~~wherein~~ the extraction is carried out at a temperature of approximately 10°C to 60°C, preferably at ambient temperature.

7. (Currently Amended) Process according to any
~~one of Claims~~claim 1 to 6, characterized in thatwherein the
light phase comprising the glyoxal diacetal of formula (I) and
the solvent is subjected to a separation, on conclusion of
which said glyoxal diacetal is recovered.

8. (Currently Amended) Process according to Claim
7, characterized in thatwherein this separation is carried out
by distillation under reduced pressure.

9. (Currently Amended) Process according to
~~either one of Claims~~claim 7 and or 8, characterized in
thatwherein this separation is carried out at a temperature of
between ambient temperature and approximately 120°C.

10. (Currently Amended) Process according to any
~~one of Claims~~claim 1 to 9, characterized in thatwherein the
solvent is recycled to the liquid-liquid extraction step.

11. (Currently Amended) Process according to any
~~one of Claims~~claim 1 to 10, characterized in thatwherein the
crude mixture is obtained by an acetalization reaction of 40
to 75% by weight aqueous glyoxal with an alcohol of formula R-
OH in which R is as defined in Claim 1, the R-OH/glyoxal molar
ratio being between 10/1 and 50/1, preferably 10/1 to 30/1, in
the presence of an acid catalyst, followed by the distillation

of the reaction mixture obtained in order to remove the excess alcohol R-OH.

12. (Currently Amended) Process according to any one of Claims claim 1 to 11, characterized in thatwherein, in the formulae (I) and (II), R is a C₁-C₂ alkyl group.

13. (Currently Amended) Process according to Claim 12, characterized in thatwherein R is a methyl group.

14. (Currently Amended) Process according to any one of Claims claim 1 to 13, characterized in thatwherein the alcohol is methanol.

15. (Currently Amended) Process according to any one of Claims claim 1 to 14, characterized in thatwherein the crude mixture comprises predominantly 1,1,2,2-tetramethoxyethane (TME), dimethoxyethanal (DME) and water.

16. (Currently Amended) Process according to any one of Claims claim 1 to 15, characterized in thatwherein said mixture comprises, as percentages by weight, approximately 25 to 60% of TME, approximately 7 to 35% of DME and approximately 20 to 50% of water.

17. (Currently Amended) Process according to any one of Claims claim 1 to 16, characterized in thatwherein said

mixture also comprises, as percentages by weight,
approximately 0 to 15% of glyoxal, approximately 0 to 10% of
methanol and approximately 0 to 5% of impurities.

18. (Currently Amended) Process according to any
~~one of Claims~~claim 11 to 17, characterized in thatwherein the
glyoxal used in the acetalization reaction is concentrated to
approximately 60 to 70%.

19. (Currently Amended) Process according to Claim
18, characterized in thatwherein the glyoxal is concentrated
from an aqueous solution.

20. (Currently Amended) Process according to any
~~one of Claims~~claim 11 to 19, characterized in thatwherein the
acetalization reaction is carried out for a period of time of
less than or equal to 1 h, preferably of less than or equal to
40 min.

21. (Currently Amended) Process according to Claim
20, characterized in thatwherein the period of time of the
reaction is less than or equal to 20 min.

22. (Currently Amended) Process according to one
~~of Claims~~claim 11 to 21, characterized in thatwherein the
acetalization reaction is carried out at a temperature of the
order of 60°C to 140°C, preferably approximately 80°C to

130°C.

23. (Currently Amended) Process according to Claim 22, characterized in thatwherein the temperature is of the order of 100 to 130°C.

24. (Currently Amended) Process according to one of Claimsclaim 11 to 23, characterized in thatwherein the acetalization reaction is carried out at a pressure of greater than or equal to atmospheric pressure.

25. (Currently Amended) Process according to Claim 24, characterized in thatwherein the pressure is less than or equal to 15 bar.

26. (Currently Amended) Process according to any one of Claimsclaim 1 to 25, characterized in thatwherein the acetalization reaction, the liquid-liquid extraction step and the recovery of the various constituents of the crude mixture are carried out continuously, the glyoxal, the glyoxal monoacetal, the alcohol R-OH and the extraction solvent being recycled.